DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 073 023 SO 005 379

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TITLE A Conceptually Based Social Studies Model for the Training of Teachers: Emphasis on Improved Racial Attitudes, Knowledges, and Activities.
PUB DATE Nov 72
NOTE 7p.; A paper presented to The National Council for Social Studies, Boston, Massachusetts, November 22, 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Conceptual Schemes; Disadvantaged Youth; Human Relations; Minority Group Children; *Models; *Preservice Education; *Racial Attitudes; Racial Discrimination; Research Utilization; *Social Studies; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education; Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

A model training program for improving racial attitudes and behaviors of future teachers is presented in this paper. The long range program goal is to help preservice students become knowledgeable, humane, and capable teachers and human beings. Although the research basis for this paper, described in document SO 005 383, indicated that racial attitudes, knowledge, and activities of every human being are developed over a lifetime, the same research study indicated that teacher education students might gain improved attitudes, increased knowledge, and some formative activities for better relating to children of all races through a training program. The main instructional components of this social studies model can provide students with: 1) knowledge about minority groups, cultural styles of life, the specific learning characteristics of minority groups, and effective teacher behaviors for working with disadvantaged groups; 2) actual practicum settings in which students can view the various social aspects of disadvantaged children; 3) value development sessions to form positive and humane value orientations toward minority groups; and 4) seminar sessions in which students can discuss issues that related to children and adults of minority groups. (SJM)

ED 077023

A CONCEPTUALLY BASED SOCIAL STUDIES MODEL FOR THE TRAINING OF TEACHER: EMPHASIS ON IMPROVED RACIAL ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGES, AND ACTIVITIES.

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A Paper Presented To: The College and University Faculty Assembly of The National Council For The Social Studies at Boston, Massachusetts on November 22, 1972.

SP 005 379

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November, 1972 at Carbondale, Illinois

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The background and research basis for this paper is presented in a previous paper developed by the authors entitled: "DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE RACIAL ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGES, AND ACTIVITIES IN PRE-SERVICE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS". This paper is a conceptually developed process which if experimented with implemented in different contexts, and organized around various other teacher education components should lead to improved racial attitudes, increased knowledges about minority groups and to more logical and effective implementation of activities in the classroom which will involve young children in situations which will help them to clarify and improve their racial attitudes.

The research by Swick and Lamb[1] (Which included a review of research on special programs which aimed to improve the racial attitudes of teachers and a report and analysis of an experimental course of study which was specifically designed to improve the racial attitudes of pre-service teachers) indicated that indeed the racial attitudes, knowledges, and activities of every human being are shaped over a lifetime and are not isolated elements which teacher educators can deal with separate from the other social influences existent in the environment.

Yet this same research study[2] pointed toward some direction which teacher educators might experiment with and begin to develop a conceptually based strategy for social studies teacher education students to become involved in, and in which these same students might gain improved attitudes, increased knowledges, and some formative activities for better relating to children of all races.

Again emerging from the Lamb/Swick studies were four distinct instructional components that can be organized within teacher training programs, especially in the social studies training of teachers for the purpose of improving racial attitudes and increasing the information and activities awareness of students about various minority groups they will be teaching in the classrooms of the nations' schools.

These four components of a social studies model are: (1) knowledges about minority groups, (2) value development sessions dealing with the orientation of minority groups, (3) practicum experiences with minority groups, and (4) seminar sessions oriented to racial attitudes of teacher and children. Each of these components was examined in the research

study by Lamb and Swick; for detailed research results on each other components see the research analysis section of the paper.[3] The intent of this paper is to discuss each of these components as they relate to helping pre-service social studies teachers develop desired racial behaviors in the classroom and in their personal lives.

Knowledges About Culturally Diverse Groups. (For a brief description of one approach to providing information input on culturally diverse groups see the Program Treatment section of the Swick/Lamb study.[4] One very clear result of the research aspect of this study was that knowledges about minority groups in teacher education students. Indeed increased knowledges about culturally diverse groups of children and people would definitely be a pre-requisite to developing more constructive attitudes toward those groups and certainly would be a necessary component of a teachers' orientation to developing classroom activities which might help the chidren develop improved racial attitudes.

Three specific elements of the knowledge component would be: (1) student knowledges about the cultural styles of various minority groups in the society, (2) student knowledges about the specific learning characteristics of minority group children, and (3) student knowledges about effective teacher behaviors for working with disadvantaged and minority group children.

The element on knowledges about minority group life styles may well be placed in the general studies background of the teacher education student, for example, courses of study (if related and structured properly) dealing with the sociology of minority groups, the history of minority groups, and the psychology of minority groups may be very effective in accomplishing this aspect of the information and knowledge component.

The other two elements of this component (knowledges about specific learning characteristics of disadvantaged groups and knowledges about effective teacher behaviors for working with disadvantaged groups) should be effectively built into the pre-and-in-service training program for teachers. Courses of study dealing with teaching minority group and disadvantaged children should specifically give attention to the special problems, talents, and learning orientation of these children. (This in no way reflects that disadvantaged children are always poor, rather the wealthiest child may fall into this category). In addition such courses of study should formulate a conceptual backdrop on effective teacher behaviors for relating to children of minority groups and/or children who are at a disadvantage for one reason or another.

The knowledge component of training should attend to providing the pre-service teacher with information on life styles, cultural settings, learning orientations, and effective ways to pull these aspects of the minority group child together for creative-humanistic classroom teaching.

Practicum Experiences. A related and equally important component of a program of training social studies teachers for improved racial attitudes and increased knowledges and activities of minority group children is the experience based component. This component, contrary to many popular beliefs, should be initiated in correspondence to the

knowledge elements being put forth to the students. Thus sociology of minority groups courses of study should not simply be readings courses but rather contain practicum settings for students to view, participate, evaluate, and construct ideas on the various social aspects of the life styles of minority group people.

Likewise, the teacher education courses which are oriented to teaching disadvantaged children, should provide practicum settings (such as day care centers, head start centers, public school settings, and recreation programs) which offer the student a chance to identify characteristics of disadvantaged children, and to view hopefully effective teacher behaviors in operation.

Finally, teacher education programs should include in the culminating practice teaching experience opportunities for pre-service teachers to demonstrate their skills in relating to children who are at a disadvantage and to indicate that they are familiar with characteristics of children who are disadvantaged. The practicum setting can lead to more effective utilization of related course work in dealing with values development and clarification of ideas on working with children of minority groups and/or other children who are at a disadvantage.

Value Development Sessions. In conjunction with the knowledge component and the practicum component is the value development component The rationale for developing more consistent and constructive value orientations of teachers toward racial and ethnic groups is all too obvious and is well substantiated by research in the social sciences. (See Swick and Lamb[5] for detailed substantiation).

This component of the program should be structured so that growing out of the information and practicum components are opportunities for students to discuss (at every step of their education)the value conflicts, inquiries, and misconceptions they have about minority groups and/or disadvantaged children.

Such value development sessions should attend to the kinds of concerns that have a definite impact on the formation of teacher attitudes toward minority group children which in turn effect the behaviors and expectations of these teachers toward minority group children. Topics such as learning abilities, special talents and skills, and related value choices which minority group and disadvantaged children select out for their life choices should be attend to in these sessions.

Seminar Sessions. A special place for discussing the myriad of issues that arise in practicum settings and in specific contacts with children and adults of minority groups should be available to the student training to teach. In the same perspective these seminar sessions should provide the pre-service teacher with a chance to exchange teaching behavior ideas which arise from their involvement in practicum school settings. The sharing of materials, ideas, problems, and methodological approaches to teaching children of minority groups not only creates a atmosphere of peermanship but also allows for the thinking through of new attitudes, knowledges, and activities for internalization by the individual involved in the teacher education program.

The seminar context can provide an arena for exchange of information, a place where one can gain support from their peers, and a context for clarification of value orientations toward minority group and/or disadvantaged children.

Program Components and Time Percentages. An obvious but very important question that arises from an analysis of these components of a model training program for improving the racial attitudes and behaviors of social studies teachers in: What time weights should be given to each of the different components involved in the program? It is a difficult question to answer, a variety of experimental studies (with the attempt to shape different variables and settings) is necessary before any reliable answer can be given. Yet the authors would like to propose some alternate possibilities for teacher educators to implement in their particular college and university settings.

Although much of the research on improving teacher attitudes toward minority and other disadvantaged groups stress the need for practicum and other experiential involvement of teachers with the children, it should be pointed out that such contact without previous knowledge input, value clarification and development, and a sequential introduction to the practicum setting can be as useless as having been provided adequate information without being provided an arena for applying that information.

Like other facets of the learning act it is necessary to examine the individual racial attitudes, knowledges, and activities internalized by the particular student with which one is involved. Some students may already have attained adequate knowledge levels about the cultural styles of minority groups but need more information on appropriate teaching behaviors for relating to disadvantaged children. Likewise some students may have adequate information on specific minority groups but need information on other groups of sub-cultural people.

The racial attitudes of some students may be very positive and thus they may be able to enter practicum settings earlier than other individuals. A very probable limitation of the Swick/Lamb study was the delimiting of the research analysis to group changes in the variables under study, because in reality the teaching act is performed by individuals in social settings.

It can be recommended that the development of program components in terms of stress be organized around an individualized instructional setting which still allows for the development of peer interaction for the purpose of gaining a maximum growth level for all the students. And the total university curriculum must be involved in this organizational effort if teacher educators are to be able to create settings for the development of improved teacher attitudes, knowledges, and behaviors toward ethnic-racial groups.

Desired Teacher Behaviors. The ultimate outcome of efforts to improve social studies teachers racial attitudes and behaviors (as well as other teacher attitudes and behaviors) can be categorized into three broad areas of concern: A Knowledgeable Teacher, A Humane Teacher, and A Capable Teacher.

The knowledgeable Teacher would be a person who had information on the various minority group sub-cultures in our society, had information on the specific characteristics of disadvantaged children, and had information on effective teaching behaviors for relating and involving the children in constructing improved behaviors toward all groups of people.

The Humane Teacher would be a person who had internalized positive racial and ethnic attitudes. Such an individual would be able to perceive children of all sub-cultures as good human beings, able to contribute something special to the world in which they live. The teacher who is humane expects each child to succeed at his life goals, to go beyond the in-humane teacher expectations of him which are often very low goal perceptions.

The Capable Teacher is one who can initiate multi-cultural learning in the classroom. She is capable of arranging and implementing human relations seminars, developing methodological approaches for helping the children improve their racial and ethnic understandings, develop community involvement programs which help the children and adults gain a better understanding of the world, develop learning materials and resources for constructively involving children in social learning that promotes humane understanding of all people. In brief, such a teacher is capable of humanizing the classroom and thus the adult community by the things she is doing with children and parents.

Summary. The components of a social studies model which aims to improve the racial attitudes and behaviors of pre-service teachers has been conceptually outlined in this paper. Attached to this paper are visual models depicting this conceptual approach to improving social studies teachers racial attitudes.

Providing pre-service teachers with information on minority group sub-cultures, a chance to develop positive and humane value orientations, and the opportunity to apply these skills in a practicum and seminar setting can lead to desired teacher behaviors toward all groups of children. Indeed more experimentation is needed; but a beginning is in process and the goal is clear: A Better World Through Better Teaching.

REFERENCES

[1]Kevin J. Swick and Morris L. Lamb, "DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE RACIAL ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGES, AND ACTIVITIES IN PRE-SERVICE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS," Paper present to: The College and University Faculty Assembly at The National Council For The Social Studies in Boston, Mass., 1972. Pp. 1-5.

[2]Ibid., pp. 6-8.

[3]Ibid., pp. 10-17.

[4]Ibid., pp. 6-8.

[5]Ibid., pp. 1-7.